(a) whether a scheme called'helpline for older persons' has been started in Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bhuj;

(b) whether the scheme has been extended to other cities;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir. One Helpline in Delhi had started during the year 1999-2000. Two Helplines in Ahmedabad had Bhuj had started during the year 2000-01.

(b) At present the scheme is not extended to other cities.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No further request has been received.

Proposal to revamp the adoption services

595. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to revamp the adoption services in the country;

(b) whether Government propose to set up Adoption Cell in every State; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in that regard particularly to promote and regulate adoption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) No, Sir. However, promotion of in-country adoption and streamlining of the adoption activity in the country is a continuous process.

(b) and (c) Circulars have already been issued to all the State Governments to expedite setting up of Adoption Cells in their respective States. State Governments have also been advised to streamline their adoption procedures by taking, *inter-alia*, the following steps:-

(i) Licensing of all residential institutions and setting up of Advisory Committees.

(ii) Keeping a strict vigil on Nursing Homes to stop illegal adoptions.

(iii) Enforcement of Orphanages and other Charitable Homes Act, 1960 and any other relevant Act in the concerned State.

(iv) Regular monitoring of adoption agencies.

In addition, a number of Training and Awareness Programmes are being regularly held under the National Initiative on Adoption which commenced in the year 2000-2001.

Grants for special school for visually handicapped in A.P.

596. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are running or providing Central grants for running special schools for the visually handicapped in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof, school-wise/institution-wise;

(c) how many of these schools are exclusively for blind girls/women; and

(d) the details of facilities being given in these schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Under the scheme to Promote Voluntary Actions for Persons with Disabilities 7 non-governmental organizations are getting assistance for running schools for the visually handicapped.

(b) A Statement is annexed. (*See* below)

(c) All these schools are co-educational institutions.

(d) In these schools facilities of education, vocational training and mobility orientation are provided with or without residential facilities.